



CENTRE FOR
Women's Safety
and Wellbeing

Preventing violence,
promoting health,
advancing gender equality

WE CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE IMPROVED RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN WA

Why call for crisis talks with the Premier?

There has been important investment into improving Western Australia's response to family and domestic violence. Yet gaps, barriers and pressure points persist. These issues are underscored by an ever-increasing demand for chronically underfunded support services. It is critical that the WA Government takes action to ensure that every person experiencing family and domestic violence can access the support and safety they need, when they need it, and ultimately prevent this violence from occurring in the first place.

Lived experience advocates, lead by Alison Scott, and family and domestic violence service providers, lead by the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing wanted the Government to embark on a more transformative agenda that included a stronger investment in key infrastructure. Namely: primary prevention, early intervention, crisis response, recovery/reestablishment and healing and workforce development.

At the crisis talks with the Premier we presented the government with a list of key asks. Our first two key asks were for a Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce and a lived experience advisory group.

The establishment of the Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce signals a welcome commitment to addressing the challenges of rising rates of family violence and reducing the incidences of trauma, injuries and deaths. This commitment provides the impetus for strengthening and better resourcing what is currently working well, sparking innovation and adapting learning from other national and international contexts to local settings, and building system architecture that contributes to the sustainability of reform initiatives.

Our call for a resourced lived experience entity was based on an identified need for a more comprehensive, coordinated, and consistent approach to working with survivor advocates in the design, delivery and evaluation of services, and the need for a survivor advocacy function within the family and domestic violence sector.



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System Architecture

It was identified that the key elements of system architecture that form the underpinning framework for a revamped and sustainable response are:

- Evidence-based, contemporary risk management tools and practices
- A clear and uniform information sharing regime
- An integrated, collaborative approach across all players in the system including Police, Courts, Child Protection and Corrections Consistent data collection and system performance metrics
- Strategies to strengthen workforce capability and capacity

Prevention

Effective primary prevention requires long-term investment and action to effect change. To support community efforts to prevent family and domestic violence we called for:

- Funding for primary prevention projects statewide
- Increased investment in whole-school respectful relationships education within all Western Australian schools
- Investment to build the capability and coordination of practitioners to engage in best practice primary prevention of family and domestic violence, and respectful relationships

Early Intervention

To stop violence from escalating and to protect victim-survivors, we called for:

- A longer-term commitment to programs with a focus on children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right.
- The creation of early-stage voluntary men's behavior change options across the State (pilot and evaluate)
- The introduction of coercive control education and 'first responder' community training (pilot and evaluate).



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Crisis Response

To ensure victim-survivors receive the support needed as they need it, we called for:

- Increased funding for Coordinated Response Services
- Increased funding for specialist advocacy, legal, and counselling services
- Sustainable funding for mobile outreach services
- 100 new crisis beds to increase the capacity of a stretched specialist family and domestic violence accommodation system
- The establishment of a 24/7 statewide family and domestic violence intake and assessment centre
- A clear and uniform information sharing regime
- Evidence-based, contemporary, multi-agency risk assessment and risk management

Recovery and Healing

To support victim-survivors to recover, reestablish themselves and heal, we called for:

- Allocation of resources for a service model aiding safety, recovery, and reestablishment of victim-survivors two years post-separation (a period of heightened risk)
- A commitment to a housing guarantee for those escaping violence.
- Increased Supported Transitional Housing.
- A coordinated 'safe at home' approach to be embedded into WA's family and domestic violence response.

Workforce Development

Workforce development strategies must be developed and must be responsive to the context and needs of family and domestic violence work. Given the high social, health and economic costs of domestic and family violence, investing in the domestic and family violence workforce has important benefits, including improved services and better client and worker wellbeing. We called for:

- An organisation to be funded to lead the development of a strong and sustainable workforce from prevention through to recovery and inclusive of allied workforces; creating consistency in risk assessment and management and supporting continuous quality improvement to enable consistent, inclusive, safe and accountable service design and delivery.